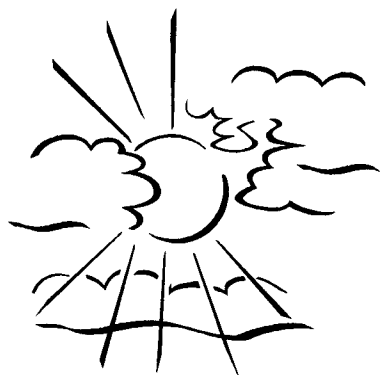


***Department
of
Human
Services***

Prepared by the
DHS Office of
Communications
(517) 373-7394

lth Care



Articles in Today's Clips

Thursday, January 5, 2006

(Be sure to maximize your screen to read your clips)

TOPIC	PAGE
* Health Care	2-3
Vulnerable Adults	4-9
Child Abuse/Neglect/Protection	10-16
Domestic Violence	17-21
Homelessness	22-26
Heating Assistance	27-28
Foster Care	29-30
Disabilities	31
State Budget	32

*Important story at this spot

January 4, 2006

MEDICAID COMMITTEE COMBINES POLICY, BUDGET

A House special committee will address long-term Medicaid reform in the coming months, the chair of the committee said Wednesday.

Rep. Gary Newell (R-Saranac), chair of the Medicaid Reform and Innovation Committee, said the 11 member-panel will use policy and budgetary strategy to tackle the issue of Medicaid reform, now one of the state's largest expenditures. The committee is made up of seven Republicans and four Democrats.

Mr. Newell said discussion on creating a task force or committee on the issue began last summer and that it is not part of House Speaker Craig DeRoche's (R- Novi) yet-t-be-announced restructuring plan.

Mr. Newell said the committee will meet regularly on Thursdays, although an agenda for members is still being worked out. In February, the committee plans to hear a demonstration from Christie Raniszewski Herrera, director of the Health and Human Services Task Force, American Legislative Exchange Council.

"We can't continue to go on in same fashion," Mr. Newell said, adding that while state revenues has remained at similar levels for 10 years, enrollment in Medicaid and the cost of the program have continued to climb.

Mr. Newell said that for the time being he has split the committee into three task forces to examine the traditional Medicaid program (headed by Rep. Bruce Caswell (R-Hillsdale)), long-term costs of the program (headed by Rep. Rick Shaffer (R-Three Rivers)) and long-term policy, which Mr. Newell will head himself.

Need Medicaid? Show Your Passport

The New York Times

January 5, 2006

Buried in the nearly 800-page federal budget bill is a nasty little provision, ostensibly aimed at immigrants, that will make it difficult for many poverty-stricken U.S. citizens to get the health care they are entitled to under Medicaid.

Advocates believe that the provision, which will require Medicaid applicants to document their U.S. citizenship (which means producing a passport or birth certificate), may be especially harmful to poor blacks, most of whom do not have passports and many of whom do not have birth certificates.

There are no exceptions to this

onerous provision, not even for people with serious physical or mental impairments, including Alzheimer's disease.

The budget bill is scheduled for a final vote in the House on Feb. 1. The Medicaid provision seems to have originated with a pair of Republican congressmen from Georgia — Nathan Deal and Charlie Norwood. The idea, Congressman Deal told me, is to create a barrier against illegal immigrants who might slip into the Medicaid program by falsely claiming they are citizens.

You haven't heard much about this latest threat to the republic because there is no evidence it is much of a problem. As the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities has reported, an extensive study by the inspector general's office of the Department of Health and Human Services "found no substantial evidence that such false applications are actually occurring and [the inspector general's office], accordingly, did not recommend making the change that is included in the [budget] agreement."

The problem will come when poor people who are ill get sucked into a

nightmare of documentation when their focus should be on their illness. The center noted: "Many individuals who require Medicaid coverage — such as people affected by emergencies like Hurricane Katrina, homeless people or those with mental illness — may be unable to get Medicaid promptly when they need it because they do not have such documents in their possession."

Many poor people live far from the cities or towns where they were born and do not have ready access to their birth certificates. And, as the center said, a large number of African-American women, especially in the South, were unable to give birth in hospitals because of racial discrimination. Many of them never received birth certificates for their babies.

A spokesman for the Senate majority leader, Bill Frist, who is a physician, said the Senate went along with the House proposal because the "members did not feel it was an unreasonable provision." He said that applicants in serious need of care would receive it, and that Medicaid officials could accept the documentation of citizenship later.

I wondered what would happen to individuals who were bedridden, destitute, disoriented, enfeebled. They might receive care in theory. But would they really? Stepping on their care seems a heavy price to pay to address an issue that very few people view as a serious problem.

I asked Abel Ortiz, who advises

The poor get clubbed again.

Gov. Sonny Perdue of Georgia on health care issues, if he was aware of any studies that showed whether significant numbers of illegal immigrants in his state were getting Medicaid benefits. He said no, although he added, "We have some cases that have happened."

The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that the new provision would save more than \$700 million over the next decade. But if illegal im-

migrants crashing the Medicaid program is not a big problem, where will the savings come from? How about from the reduction in enrollment of sick or otherwise troubled U.S. citizens who are poor and less than savvy about the arbitrary workings of the bureaucracy?

The budget bill is a good example of how the insiders and special interests get what they want in Washington, while ordinary people, who are supposed to be represented by the members of the House and Senate, get bludgeoned.

Some members of Congress wanted health care savings — if there were going to be any — to be achieved by such measures as negotiating better rates with large drug companies and managed-care facilities. But that's not the sort of thing that flies in this day and age. So the savings will be drawn like blood from the sick and the poor.

Someday the pendulum will swing back, and the government of the United States will become more representative and more humane. Meanwhile, as Lily Tomlin said, "We're all in this alone." □

Caregiver imprisoned for fleecing woman, 85

Tuesday, January 05, 2006

FROM LOCAL REPORTS

A 48-year-old Whitehall woman has been sentenced to prison for embezzlement and check forgery for stealing more than \$1,700 from the 85-year-old woman she helped as a live-in caregiver.

Muskegon County Circuit Judge Timothy G. Hicks on Dec. 27 ordered Cindy Jeanne Roy, 216 First, to prison for between 15 months and 21 years for uttering and publishing, and between 15 months and 7 1/2 years for embezzlement of more than \$1,000 but less than \$20,000 from a vulnerable adult, with credit for 140 days already served in jail. She was sentenced as a second-time habitual offender. The sentences are to be served at the same time. Roy also was ordered to pay \$2,698 in restitution, fines and costs.

She pleaded guilty to both charges Nov. 28.

Norton Shores police arrested Roy in August after the victim's 48-year-old daughter filed a complaint. Police said Roy had lived with the older woman in her home on Arborway Drive from February until the victim's death in July, running errands and paying bills for her. When the victim's family received a bank statement after the elderly woman's death, they found a number of canceled checks that had not been signed by their mother, police said.

Prosecutor warns elderly of 'new breed of scams'

Trace Christenson

The Battle Creek Enquirer

A Battle Creek man lost more than \$3,000 in what police are calling an ongoing scam against the elderly.

The problem is not new, but law enforcement officials are warning residents to be careful.

"Scams have been around for years, decades, but they have taken on new forms," Calhoun County Prosecutor John Hallacy said Wednesday. He said people have lost money for years to con artists who promised to pave driveways or build houses and then left with the money and without performing the work.

"But with the advent of technology there is a whole new breed of scams people need to be aware of."

Michigan State Police Lt. Dale Peet, commander of the Battle Creek post, said a 75-year-old man recently received a check and a promise he had won \$750,000 in the Canadian lottery.

The man, whom police didn't identify, was instructed in a letter to cash the \$3,225 check and send a money order for \$2,800 as a bond for his winnings to an address in Canada.

The man sent the money order by Western Union, Peet said, but the check was later found to be counterfeit and now the man's bank is seeking repayment from the victim.

"Every bank has their own policy," Peet said, "and when there is a police investigation some of them will cover the loss but realistically the person who cashed the check has to take some responsibility. That money is gone and now the bank is trying to recoup it."

He said in November an 84-year-old Battle Creek man was contacted by phone and told he had won a large sum of money. He was about to send \$1,500 to an address in Jamaica as a fee for his winnings but was stopped by an alert Federal Express worker.

"This has been going on for years and they are continuing, and we just need to get it out into the public view," Peet said. "People just don't seem to get the message. They should remember that if it's too good to be true, it probably is."

Lt. Tony Geigle of the Emmett Township Department of Public Safety said his officers periodically receive calls questioning possible scams, from driveway and construction fraud to all types of Internet deception. He said some people contact people selling merchandise on eBay or through want ads in the Battle Creek Enquirer, offering to pay even more than the asking price and then sending a bad check.

He said the seller is sometimes ready to send the item without letting the check clear.

"They are playing on people's greed," he said.

Hallacy suggested checking anyone who seems to be offering something which seems too good to be true.

"It pays to make that one extra phone call to police or the Better Business Bureau or the prosecutor," he said.

He said Internet scams have made apprehension and prosecution more difficult.

"They are more difficult to track down because with the technology they can hide themselves pretty much anywhere in the world," Hallacy said.

Trace Christenson covers crime and courts. He can be reached at 966-0685 or tchrist@battlecr.gannett.com.

Originally published January 5, 2006

Police investigating assault

Petoskey News Review

Wednesday, January 4, 2006 1:16 PM EST

BOYNE CITY - Police in Boyne City are continuing their investigation into the assault of an elderly man Saturday.

According to Boyne City assistant police chief Jeff Gettel, the 76-year-old man told police he received injuries to his face and head in the assault, which took place in his apartment. The following day the man, who police did not identify, was transported to Northern Michigan Hospital where he was treated for his injuries.

Police said initial reports indicated that the assault might have been sexual in nature, but investigation and medical examination since has ruled out a sexual assault.

Police noted that another assault occurred in the same apartment complex shortly after the original incident when a person assaulted a man who he or she believed was the assailant in the earlier assault. Authorities said the suspect in the second assault, who police also did not identify, was later arrested on an outstanding bench warrant and lodged at the Charlevoix County Jail.

Police said the original assault on the 76-year-old remains under investigation and the case will be forwarded to the prosecutor's office when the investigation is complete.

LSS
1/5/06

IN BRIEF

2B

Fatal nursing home fire remains unsolved

MARQUETTE — The cause of a deadly fire at an Upper Peninsula nursing home has not been determined, an investigator said Wednesday.

Two residents were killed and more than 100 evacuated in the Dec. 12 fire at Mather Nursing Center in Ishpeming Township.

Detective Sgt. Jeff Hubbard of the Michigan State Police, who is leading the investigation, said tests were still being conducted on evidence collected in the room where the fire broke out. He told The Mining Journal it probably would take several weeks to settle on a likely cause.

During a meeting Monday with relatives of the nursing home residents, survey monitor Mary Hess of the Michigan Department of Community Health said the fire source "is believed to be, but can't be confirmed, a lighter in possession of one of the residents."

From wire reports

Thursday, January 05, 2006

The Detroit News

Special Letter

Adult foster care facilities aren't nursing homes

The Laura Berman column chronicling a sexual abuse case in an adult foster-care facility failed to make the crucial distinction between adult foster-care facilities and nursing homes ("Law should change to protect women in nursing homes," Dec. 13).

What happened to the victim is tragic. Our heartfelt sympathy goes out to the victim and her family. But the assault did not occur in a nursing home -- it occurred in an adult foster-care facility.

The problem is not with current law or nursing home patient safety standards; it's that facilities like this adult foster-care home don't have the same tough regulations as nursing homes, and that the media's bias against nursing homes prevents objective reporting.

Unsubstantiated allegations against nursing homes are counterproductive, causing knee-jerk reactions like the recent legislation to further regulate nursing homes, which, ironically, would have absolutely no impact on the adult foster care that prompted it.

Michigan Association of Homes and Services for the Aging and Health Care Association of Michigan members -- including nursing homes -- fully support criminal background checks on employees and conducted such checks well before the legislation was introduced. They actively monitor their staff to prevent abuse and voluntarily share information to weed out unsuitable employees. And members support penalties for facilities that willfully fail to uphold patient safety standards.

Members have also voluntarily joined the national Quality First program to ensure that facilities have common guidelines to proactively safeguard patient safety.

David Herbel

Reginald Carter

Senior Vice President Government Strategy Michigan Association of Homes and Services for the Aging President and CEO Health Care Association of Michigan Lansing

Police awaiting autopsy results in Ironwood infant death

Ironwood Daily Globe

January 5, 2006

IRONWOOD -- Additional autopsy laboratory results are being awaited as the Ironwood Public Safety Department investigates the weekend death of a 6-week-old girl.

Public safety department director Robert Erspamer said Wednesday there were no new developments in the investigation, pending the complete autopsy results. He said he didn't know when they will be available.

Man faces charges in child abuse

Thursday, January 05, 2006

By Scott Hagen
shagen@citpat.com -- 768-4929

Police arrested a 27-year-old Summit Township man for allegedly beating a 4-year-old child in a fit of rage, for which he apparently told police he needed anger management.

The man, whose name is not being released pending his arraignment in district court, was living with the child's mother in a trailer park on Brooklyn Road. The mother was not at home at the time of the alleged assault and the man was supposed to be baby-sitting the girl, said Capt. Kevin Stellingworth of the Jackson County Sheriff's Department.

The man called the Family Independence Agency himself to report what he had done, police said.

The child, whose name is not being released, told police that the man became angry when she broke a Christmas present. Police found extensive bruising on the girl's face, including a black eye, and buttocks as well as scratches on her elbows.

The mother told police that the man had been living with them for eight months.

The man faces a charge of assault less than murder and should be arraigned today.

The child was taken to Foote Hospital for treatment and further medical examinations, police said. She was later released.

News

Hearings delayed for couple charged with child sexual abuse

Wednesday, January 4, 2006 12:15 PM EST

Leopoldo Garcia Jaso Jr. and Shanna Kay Scroggins are charged in a Woodstock Township case.

By Dennis Pelham

Adrian Daily Telegram Staff Writer

ADRIAN - Hearings in Lenawee County District Court for a couple charged in a child sexual abuse case were delayed two weeks while privately retained attorneys prepare to take over from public defenders.

Leopoldo Garcia Jaso Jr., 50, is accused of sexually assaulting a girl younger than 13 over a one-year period that ended Oct. 1, 2004, when Michigan State Police began an investigation. Shanna Kay Scroggins, 36, is charged with second-degree child abuse for failing to protect the girl at her Woodstock Township home.

The couple moved to Texas last year after state officials removed the child from Scroggins' home, according to state police at the Adrian post. They were arrested Nov. 21 in Texas and returned to Michigan last month.

Both Jaso and Scroggins were remanded to jail Tuesday after Judge Natalia M. Koselka granted defense motions to delay preliminary examinations. Both are being held in lieu of \$100,000 bonds pending Jan. 17 hearings.

It is the second time Jaso has faced charges of raping a girl younger than 13. He served 14 years of a 10- to 15-year sentence he received in 1988 for a second-degree criminal sexual conduct conviction. He was released from prison in June 2002, according to Michigan Department of Corrections records.

At his sentencing in 1988, then Lenawee County Circuit Judge Kenneth B. Glaser said he was handing down the maximum sentence possible because he saw little hope that Jaso could be reformed.

Jaso admitted sexually assaulting a girl over a five-year period, beginning when she was 8 years old. The abuse began shortly after he was released from a prison sentence for a 1974 murder in Adrian.

“The protection of the public, in my judgment, must be the primary concern with the

sentencing,” Glaser said after noting Jaso claimed he had undergone a religious conversion. “I have dim hopes for your rehabilitation. I think they are practically nonexistent,” Glaser told him.

Jaso received lenient treatment in 1974 when, as an 18-year-old, he shot a man to death on an Adrian street. The judge in that case, Rex B Martin, handed down a 15- to 50-year prison sentence and told Jaso he believed he could still succeed in life.

According to court documents, Jaso admitted shooting another Adrian teenager, Alfredo Flores, after the two got into a fist fight at a home on James Street. Two friends of Jaso brought rifles to the home and confronted Flores as he was leaving. Witnesses testified at a hearing that Jaso's friends were talked into lowering their guns and allowing Flores to leave. Jaso grabbed a rifle from one of them. He aimed at the victim and fired a single, fatal shot.

He was released on parole after serving eight years of his minimum 15-year prison term.

Judge won't reunite son with parents

Thursday, January 05, 2006

By Nate Reens and John Agar
The Grand Rapids Press

GRAND RAPIDS -- As Micah and Ofelia Garcia battled allegations they injured a girl they were trying to adopt, the Wyoming couple's attorneys led them away from attempts to improve their parenting skills.

That advice has jeopardized the possibility they will regain custody of their son, Joshua, 5, who has been in foster care for 17 months, Kent County Family Court Judge Nanaruth Carpenter said Wednesday.

Joshua was taken away from his parents because of the allegations the couple had injured the girl in their care.

Carpenter refused to grant a request by prosecutors to terminate the couple's parental rights, but admonished them and their lawyers, Damian Nunzio and Helen Nieuwenuis, for failing to participate in a court-ordered plan aimed at reunification.

"I can't find by clear and convincing evidence ... that Joshua will be harmed if returned to his parents," Carpenter said, noting she lacked any background because the Garcias' attorneys "steered" them away from a program through Bethany Christian Services.

"I cannot find that reasonable efforts have been made," toward reuniting Micah Garcia, 30, and his 23-year-old wife with their son, Carpenter said.

Nunzio said he advised the couple against taking part in the plan because he feared the results of counseling sessions and psychological testing could be used against them in criminal proceedings.

"They'll do whatever they have to do to get their son back," Nunzio said after Wednesday's hearing.

Kent County prosecutors earlier this year dropped a second-degree child abuse charge against the couple, who maintained the girl, 6, was accidentally scalded in August 2004 when she entered a hot bath on her own.

The girl, who was adopted by another family last month, suffered third-degree burns over much of her body and still wears pressure garments to reduce scarring from the burns and skin grafts. Carpenter said there is no evidence suggesting the Garcias' provided an unsafe home for their son.

The judge did express concern that the 17 months away from Joshua harmed the family.

"The bond with the parents has been stretched and strained and may well be broken," Carpenter said.

The attorney representing Joshua, Michael Liquigli, said the Garcias have done themselves no favors by not involving themselves in parenting and anger management classes and other examinations. "To date, they've done nothing."

School safety laws draw mixed reactions

Jenny Lancour – Escanaba Daily Press
jlancour@dailypress.net

A new "School Safety" law which requires fingerprinting and criminal background checks of all school employees in Michigan is receiving mixed reaction from area school officials.

Some criminal convictions could result in the firing of school employees. For other offenses, school administrators will have the option of deciding the fate of an individual's employment. The new legislation, enacted this fall, gives districts 2½ years to comply with the fingerprinting requirements.

"There's still quite a few unanswered questions from us," said Delta-Schoolcraft Intermediate School District Superintendent Mike Koster. "Area superintendents are very concerned, particularly about the cost."

It's unknown who is responsible for paying for the fingerprinting required by the state's "unfunded mandate," Koster said.

While the new law does not define who will pay for the fingerprinting, it does say who is required to be fingerprinted. All school employees in the state must have their fingerprints scanned electronically and submitted to the State Police by July 2008, according to the state Department of Education.

January 4, 2006

CHILDREN'S TRUST FUND APPOINTS A NEW DIRECTOR

Richard Bearup started his first day of work as the executive director of the Children's Trust Fund Wednesday. Mr. Bearup replaced Deborah Strong whom recently retired.

The former Children's Ombudsman under former Governor John Engler, Mr. Bearup was most recently chief operating officer for Lutheran Child and Family Services of Michigan, a private adoption and foster-care agency based in Detroit. He held that post for seven years.

The trust fund, which works to prevent child abuse and neglect, administers services through the Department of Human Services, but does not directly receive state appropriations. Instead, the division receives funding through interest income, donations, license plate sales and a tax check-off.

The agency administers services, offers grants, training and technical assistance to community-based organizations working to prevent abuse. At least one service, which offers state-funded grants to communities targeting pregnant mothers and children up to three, was scrutinized in the last fiscal year when the House removed a portion of the grant money disseminated through CTF. The funding remained intact following a joint meeting of House and Senate Community Health Subcommittees.

In 2004, CTF funded 71 local abuse prevention councils, 42 direct-service programs and administered 36 secondary prevention programs.

Alleged hammer attack recounted

Thursday, January 05, 2006

By John Tunison
The Grand Rapids Press

Badly injured from repeated hammer strikes to the head, a 22-year-old Holland woman lay still on her apartment floor in hopes her boyfriend thought her dead, the woman testified in court Wednesday.

"I didn't want him knowing I was alive," she said, describing fears that she might be hit again. The victim provided key testimony against Alton E. Overweg, 39, during a probable cause hearing in Holland District Court.

Overweg, recently found competent to face court proceedings after a psychiatric evaluation, was ordered to stand trial on a charge of attempted murder Wednesday and held in jail on a \$250,000 bond.

Police accuse Overweg of using a hammer against the woman after they argued July 26 at the 136th Avenue apartment over her using a computer.

After the assault, a distraught Overweg threatened suicide and was discovered by police sitting on the railing of the Adams Street overpass at Int. 196.

Moments later, as officers approached, he ran down the highway embankment and was hit by a truck.

Overweg suffered serious injuries but has recovered.

His former girlfriend's injuries involved several gashes to the head that required stitches and bruises to the body.

"I had holes in my head from the hammer," she testified.

The woman said a verbal argument turned physical after she told Overweg she didn't care if he left her.

She said he then uttered "I'm going to kill you," dragging her down a hallway and picking up a hammer on a kitchen counter.

The victim testified Overweg hit her numerous times. When she saw a picture of her son hanging on a wall, she asked Overweg for mercy.

"I said please don't kill me, and he hit me again," she said.

The attack stopped after she lay motionless on the floor and she heard Overweg talk about killing himself, she said. After he left, the woman ran to Vanden Berg Stereo near 136th Avenue and James Street for help.

Jan 4, 11:57 PM EST

Man sentenced to life without parole in slaying of girlfriend

PONTIAC, Mich. (AP) -- A Bloomfield Hills man convicted of beating his girlfriend with a baseball bat, then stabbing her and dumping her body into a garbage can, was sentenced Wednesday to life in prison without possibility of parole.

Amir Aziz Shahideh was found guilty of first-degree murder Dec. 8 in the slaying of Leila Armin, 20, who had broken up with him in the days before she was killed on June 16.

Shahideh, 24, received the mandatory sentence from Oakland County Circuit Court Judge Steven Andrews at a hearing Wednesday afternoon.

Jurors in his trial deliberated about 4 1/2 hours before finding that he planned the murder of Armin at her home in the Detroit suburb of Troy.

Shahideh's lawyer had argued that the killing was an impulse rather than premeditated.

IN BRIEF

Jackson Citizen Patriot

Thursday, January 05, 2006

Jackson police are seeking attempted murder charges against a 23-year-old Jackson woman who allegedly stabbed her ex-boyfriend.

The woman, whose name is not being released pending her arraignment, came to the ex-boyfriend's house in the 1100 block of S. Third Street, near Garfield Street, police said. The two were not living together and had not been dating for some time.

The man, 24, told her to leave but the woman gained entry through a screen door, picked up a steak knife and stabbed him once in the chest, police said. The two have a child in common.

The man was taken to University of Michigan Hospital in Ann Arbor for surgery. He was listed in fair condition this morning.

The woman is expected to be arraigned today.

Man arraigned on marijuana charges

A Blackman Township man was arraigned Wednesday for manufacturing marijuana and maintaining a drug house.

District Judge Darryl Mazur set a \$5,000 bond for Charles Burnett, 25, who was arrested Monday morning for a **domestic dispute** before he told police about the marijuana.

Police found four to six plants at his house, which he shares with a woman and a child they have in common.

Burnett could face four years in prison if convicted. His preliminary examination is set for Jan. 17 in Mazur's court.

-- Compiled from staff reports

The Detroit News

January 5, 2006

Novi

City cuts funding to abuse agency

Haven, a nonprofit organization that provides services to victims of sexual assault and domestic abuse, will receive less money from Novi in 2006. The city has announced its Community Development Block Grants for the new year and has reduced its contributions to Haven to just under \$9,500. Haven, which helped 100 Novi families this year, had requested to keep its funding level at \$16,000. The organization gets funding from the communities it serves in Oakland County via the Oakland Livingston Human Service Agency.

Anti-torture bill now law

01/04/2006

Torturing another person in Michigan is now a crime punishable by life in prison after Gov. Jennifer Granholm signed the bill into law Tuesday.

Michigan now is only the second state in the nation to have a law prohibiting human torture, and according to legislation sponsor Rep. Tom Meyer, R-Bad Axe, it is "the most comprehensive domestic torture law on the books." Meyer introduced the bill in October due to a local case.

"Anyone who would subject another human being to such cruel and inhumane treatment deserves to spend the rest of their life in prison," Meyer said in a press release. "Under the new law, prosecutors throughout Michigan will now be able to bring these abhorrent individuals to justice."

Along with implementing a life sentence, the law allows charges for mental pain and suffering, such as the imminent threat of death or serious injury, and does not require the prosecution to prove that the infliction of pain was for a specified purpose.

A jury recently convicted Stephen Cline, 43, of Pigeon, of kidnapping and several counts of abusing a vulnerable adult, but Huron County prosecutors could not find a Michigan anti-torture statute that truly fit the crime.

"Through a concerted effort, the state now has a comprehensive law on the books to better protect Michigan residents," Meyer said. "I'd like to thank the governor for seeing the merits of this important measure."

Rep. John Espinoza, D-Croswell, had introduced anti-torture legislation in July when he learned Huron County prosecutors were frustrated with their legal options in the Cline case.

"Victims of people who torture will now have the weapons they need to get justice, and those who torture others will now be held accountable for their crimes," Espinoza said in a press release. "I applaud the governor for giving Michigan and our citizens an important law enforcement tool to help protect our families and loved ones, and to make our communities safer."

Thursday, January 05, 2006

Homeless shelter proposed Salvation Army is trying to gauge support for a permanent program and building in the county.

Steve Pardo / The Detroit News

HOWELL -- The Livingston County Salvation Army is working to see if the county would support a combination community center and homeless shelter.

Right now, the Salvation Army is in the midst of a feasibility study, said Salvation Army Capt. Joanna Rose.

Last month, the Salvation Army hired Bentz Whaley Flessner of Minneapolis to conduct interviews with about 20 community leaders, business people and county officials to see if there is enough support for the project.

Rose said the group wants to build "a core community center and attach to that one building, which would be separate, a shelter. This will help a variety of different needs that we have in Livingston County."

The Salvation Army would have to raise about \$8 million to buy the land and construct the center.

The site would have to be on three to four acres and away from a residential area.

About seven months ago, the Salvation Army got a report from a hired planning consultant whose job was to identify shortfalls in the community. The results were that Livingston County needs affordable child care and programs for teenagers.

Rose said the community center would address those issues in addition to having the separate 20-25 bed homeless shelter.

The Salvation Army operates a homeless shelter program that runs from October through April. Volunteers take the homeless to one of about a dozen churches for a week or two at a time.

"Some of these churches are out in Pinckney, some in Brighton and that makes it difficult for people getting to and from work," said Rose's husband, Derek, who is also a captain in the Livingston Salvation Army.

"And when we have children (in the program) it provides some form of stability -- it's better than being in the street -- but it's not as stable as we would like."

Last year, the Salvation Army had 112 people in the program that gives people up to 13 weeks of food and shelter while they find a job and save money to live independently.

Tim Chappelle has been in the program for a week and has already been housed at two churches. Chappelle, 52, spent "three years, three months and six days" in prison for drunken driving. He was released Dec. 20.

He has been on job interviews and expects to be hired soon.

"This has helped me so much," he said Tuesday. "I've got two job offers and I know I'll get one. It's what I needed to do to get back in the role of society again."

Chappelle said he is going to Alcoholics Anonymous meetings and has "nothing but the highest praise and blessings for the churches and the Salvation Army."

As for a permanent shelter, he said that "it would be better than shuffling around. It's hard."

"But the churches they've sent me to have been awesome. I'm eating well. They treat you like a human being. I know what I've got to do to get my life back," Chappelle said.

You can reach Steve Pardo at (517) 55205503 or spardo@detnews.com.

Good deeds: Celebrating unsung heroes Dearborn seniors take chill out of winter Henry Ford Village residents collect gloves, scarves and hats for homeless shelters.

Catherine Jun / The Detroit News

DEARBORN -- Residents at Henry Ford Village hope their donated gloves, hats and scarves will give comfort to the homeless in the winter months.

A group at the senior housing complex organized a monthlong campaign in December called the Holiday Mitten Project, collecting winter accessories for area homeless shelters.

The group collected 11 scarves, 343 pairs of gloves or mittens, 272 hats and other winter items. The World Medical Relief, based in Detroit, picked up the items and already distributed most of them to five homeless shelters throughout Wayne County.

"The idea was there was a need in the colder weather for these items," said Kathryn Scudder, a 7-year resident of Henry Ford Village.

She is credited with spearheading the drive.

"A lot of people were very generous," she said.

A 10-member committee of residents was formed to plan the drive, and volunteers made posters, decorated cardboard boxes and distributed flyers to the rest of the retirement community.

Only new or clean items were accepted; and cash donations were used to purchase items at nearby stores.

Shirley Simon, 85, gladly drove her car to at least 20 shopping trips for residents who weren't mobile enough to leave their homes.

She said she was encouraged by the number of requests she received and the drop in temperature made the project urgent. "It was so cold at that time," she said.

In the end, residents gave World Medical Relief almost \$100 in cash and just over 800 winter clothing items, including headbands, earmuffs and slippers.

"They really outdid themselves this year," said Carolyn Racklyeft, director of local programs at World Medical Relief.

People in shelters, especially those staying in warming shelters for just a night, are forced to brave the cold in the daylight, she said. The items will help "those that come with shoes and no socks, with gloves but no hat," she added.

You can reach Catherine Jun at (734) 462-2204 or cjun@detnews.com.

Contact us

Send us your good deeds in 150 words or less, and we'll publish them each Thursday.

E-mail us at

gooddeeds@detnews.com

Write to The Detroit News, Good Deeds, c/o Metro Desk, 615 W. Lafayette Blvd., Detroit, MI 48226. Please leave a daytime phone number.

Huron County awarded federal funds

The Huron Daily Tribune

01/05/2006

Huron County has been chosen to receive \$28,494 to supplement emergency food and shelter programs in the county. The selection was made by a national board that is chaired by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and consists of representatives from the Salvation Army; American Red Cross; United Jewish Communities; Catholic Charities, USA; National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.; and the United Way of America. The national board was charged to distribute the funds appropriated by Congress to help expand the capacity of food and shelter programs in high-need areas around the country.

A local board is made up of community agencies including the Human Development Commission (HDC), St. Roch's Catholic Church, Harbor Beach Food Pantry, Department of Human Services, Bay Shore Camp, Huron County Coalition Against Domestic Abuse, and United Way of Huron County. This local board will determine how the funds awarded to Huron County will be distributed among the emergency food and shelter programs run by local service agencies in the area. The local board is responsible for recommending agencies to receive these funds and any additional funds available under this phase of the program.

Under the terms of the grant from the national board, local agencies chosen to receive funds must:

1. Be private voluntary non-profits or units of government
 2. Have an accounting system
 3. Practice nondiscrimination
 4. Have demonstrated the capability to deliver emergency food and/or shelter programs and
 5. If they are a private voluntary organization, they must have a voluntary board.
- Qualifying agencies are urged to apply.

Huron County has distributed Emergency Food and Shelter funds previously with many organizations including Unionville Sebewaing Area Food Pantry, Thumb Area Assault Crisis Center, and Shared Blessing participating. These agencies were responsible for providing 9,641 meals. Public or private voluntary agencies interested in applying for emergency food and shelter program funds must contact Sean Smith, local board contact person, at the Human Development Commission (HDC) at (989) 673-4121.

The Human Development Commission (HDC) is one of 1,000 community action agency members of the National Community Action Partnership. As such, it is dedicated to "Helping People and Changing Lives." HDC offers more than 50 programs and services for individuals and communities, helping them to secure the resources necessary for self-sufficiency and an improved quality of life.

©Huron Daily Tribune 2006

Loss of representation hurts more than one city

Web-posted Jan 5, 2006

EDITORIALS

Pontiac shouldn't be labeled poor

As if Pontiac's government didn't have enough on its plate, the city is still being pressured to accept \$1 million in state and federal grants to house and otherwise assist homeless people. The Pontiac City Council and former Mayor Willie Payne spoke loudly when they initially rejected the grant last month. New Mayor Clarence Phillips says he shares their doubts. It is not that they lack compassion. It's that they're tired of every such project and initiative being almost automatically targeted toward Pontiac.

The problem is that while the various programs can help their intended clients, the presence of such grants and activities simply attracts more homeless people to the city in search of help. For years, police from other communities often have dropped off in Pontiac the vagrants they picked up in their own towns. That isn't because they have anything against Pontiac. It's because that's where the shelters are.

The case at hand is a perfect example of that unfair dynamic.

The Michigan State Housing Development Authority says that if the program is not located in Pontiac, it must be nearby because, it is claimed, there are many homeless people in the city. The fact is that, to be effective, the proposed housing and assistance project should not be clustered in a small area in any single municipality, just as most subsidized housing and so-called transitional housing is not now.

If the idea is to help people join the American economic and social mainstream - and it is - they should be in that setting, not among others who struggle.

The governmental seat of the fourth wealthiest county in the nation should not be stereotyped as a place of mostly poor people. It isn't true and isn't fair, and county government should help protect it from this injustice.

THE OAKLAND PRESS

Stupak seeks probe of high heating costs

By ERICA KOLASKI
Cheboygan Tribune Staff Writer

CHEBOYGAN - U.S. Rep. Bart Stupak, D-Menominee, is leading an effort to examine high heating costs.

Spokeswoman Adrienne Marsh said that the congressman, whose district includes Cheboygan County, has sent letters to both the chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee and the chairman of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee requesting a hearing on the price increases in natural gas and home heating oil.

"Americans are now in winter's grip and are financially suffering from dramatic energy cost increases," Stupak said in the letter. "The phones in my district and Washington offices are lighting up with complaints about high heating bills."

Stupak gave the example of a small business owner in his district who has a seven-unit apartment building who reported her last month's heating bill was \$482.92 and this month's bill at \$1,157.47.

"The heating bill is more than the owner's monthly mortgage payment on the building," he said.

Stupak reminded the chairmen that citizens throughout the country are being affected by the steep prices and the financial impact on residents in colder climate regions is breaking many family budgets.

Marsh said that Stupak has been calling for a hearing since September when reports first indicated home heating costs could escalate by as much as 90 percent this winter.

"Many people in my district drive long distances to and from work, so for several months they have been hit by high gasoline costs. Now, they are being hit by skyrocketing home heating costs and they are expecting Congress to do something to bring relief to the financial squeeze they are experiencing."

Stupak offered to host the potential Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee hearing in Northern Michigan so that members would have an opportunity to more clearly understand the difficult circumstances residents in colder weather states are forced to endure under the latest increases in home heating costs.

Stupak represents 31 Northern Michigan counties, including all of the Upper Peninsula and Northern Lower Michigan.

Forum will offer ways to cut home heating bills

HOMETOWN HEADLINES

GENESEE COUNTY

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Thursday, January 05, 2006

By Rhonda S. Sanders

rsanders@flintjournal.com • 810.766.6374

Information on ways to lower home heating bills or find help paying them will be the topic of a public forum at 5:30 p.m. today, co-sponsored by the Salem Housing Community Development Corp. and Consumers Energy.

It will be held at Salem Housing, 3216 King Avenue, Flint.

Details: 785-5340, ext. 21 or 25.

Crash victim left hole in large, evolving family

Thursday, January 05, 2006

JOE SNAPPER
THE SAGINAW NEWS

Over the course of 30 years, members of a Chesaning foster family grew accustomed to loved ones leaving their seven-bedroom house for more permanent lives.

But even that couldn't begin to prepare the Jurstiks for the permanent loss of Cristal A. Jurstik -- one of their own.

Jurstik turned 18 Sunday and died in a traffic crash Tuesday as she drove a minivan with 16-year-old Kathlene at her side, her biological sister who Larry and Judy Jurstik also adopted. The foggy gloom of overcast skies and temperatures hovering above freezing proved deadly, offering just a half-mile of visibility at Meridian and M-46, just east of Breckenridge in Gratiot County, police said.

Plans for her funeral were not final because authorities were planning an autopsy, her family said.

"We're hanging in there," said Kelly Krupp, 30, the eldest of five Jurstik daughters in the large and ever-changing clan.

Because Judy Jurstik, who died Dec. 6, 2000 -- the same year a fire destroyed the family home -- had suffered from diabetes, pregnancy was difficult. So the couple housed dozens of wards of the state, said Krupp, a married mother of two.

She was the first child for the Jurstiks, who adopted her not long after their foster care began. Six years later, they got pregnant and had Kim. The next three -- Christina, Cristal and Kathlene -- all were adopted, Krupp said.

Their father, meanwhile, is suffering from his exposure to Agent Orange during the Vietnam War, she said.

"We're a tight family," Krupp added.

Cristal Jurstik attended both high school and Main Street Academy, a school of cosmetology in Owosso. The young woman with straight, shoulder-length hair wanted to work as a stylist in a salon, Krupp said.

"She loved it," her sister said. "She absolutely loved it."

Administrators put Chesaning High School into a "crisis situation" Wednesday, providing grief counselors to those who needed them among the school's 630 students, including 17-year-old Christina, Principal David A. Lewis said.

The evening of the crash, Cristal Jurstik had driven to Midland to retrieve Kathlene from her boyfriend's house there. They were coming home, Krupp said.

Kathlene Jurstik suffered minor injuries in the crash and doctors discharged her from Covenant Medical Center on Wednesday, Krupp said.

Inclement weather appears the leading cause of the wreck, in which Jurstik's minivan collided with a pickup, Breckenridge Police Chief Robert Mecomber said.

The pickup driver, a 29-year-old Merrill man, was not hurt. He will not face charges in the crash, in which his truck hit the driver's side of the Jurstik minivan broadside, Mecomber said.

All three motorists were wearing seat belts, Mecomber said.

He added that it's a mystery why the M-46 and Meridian intersection -- which serves as the border between Saginaw and Gratiot counties -- is a magnet for nasty wrecks.

"There's clear visibility, there's a stop sign, there's lights and for some reason there's accidents on that corner," the chief said. "To this day, we do not understand why."

Joe Snapper is a staff writer for The Saginaw News. You may reach him at 776-9715.

Fenton Township wants to use grant to fix disabled teen's house

Bedroom, bathroom doorways are too small for wheelchair

155
11/3/06
ASSOCIATED PRESS

FENTON TWP. — Josh Knapp's mother says he never complains about his condition. But local officials want to make life a bit easier for the 17-year-old, who uses a wheelchair after losing both arms and a leg to bacterial meningitis.

Fenton Township plans to use \$55,000 in federal block grant money to upgrade the house where Josh lives with his family. Genesee County will need to sign off on the plan.

"I think it's great that the community is willing to help Josh," his mother, Jackie Cornell, told The Flint Journal. "They don't know

Josh, other than seeing him cruise up and down the road (in his wheelchair). God or somebody's looking over us at this point."

Wheelchair accessibility is a problem in the house. Josh has to slide on his backside to get into the bedroom he shares with his sister because his chair won't fit through the door. The house also needs new flooring because of water damage caused by a poorly installed shower. The entrance to the bathroom also is too small for Josh's wheelchair.

When he was 5, Josh came down with a fever. He was diagnosed with an ear infection, but his condition worsened. He went into a coma and was not expected to live more than 24 hours. Six weeks later, his mother had him unhooked from a ventilator. Instead of dying, Josh regained consciousness.

Gangrene soon developed, though. First, his right leg was am-

"I just think this program is a blessing to be able use it to help a boy like Josh."

Lorraine Zimmer
Fenton Township trustee

putated and then his arms — one just below the elbow and the other just above it. Josh's mental capacity is at about a first-grade level.

Township board members learned about Josh from an article in a local newspaper, said Trustee Lorraine Zimmer.

About the same time, she also read in a Michigan Townships Association newsletter about creative ways to spend federal block grant money, and began to research whether Josh could be helped.

Fenton Township allocated \$55,000 of its federal Community Development Block Grant money to the Genesee County Home Improvement Program, which pays for no-interest loans to bring houses owned by needy families up to minimum living standards.

How much of the loan must be repaid depends on the homeowner's income level. No payments are required until the house is sold.

Josh's family is the only one in Fenton Township that applied for the money.

"I just think this program is a blessing to be able to use it to help a boy like Josh," Zimmer said.

The county typically awards Home Improvement Program loans of \$10,000 to \$15,000 to about 50 families per year.

Genesee County will make a decision on Josh's house after getting estimates for the proposed repairs, the Journal reported.

State in new year with a \$318 million surplus

WJ 1/5/06
2B
ASSOCIATED PRESS

The state budget for the fiscal year that ended in September has about \$318 million more than originally projected, budget director Mary Lannoye said Wednesday.

The general fund had a surplus

of \$220 million and the School Aid Fund had \$98 million extra, Lannoye said in a written statement.

Most of the general fund surplus is due to one-time surges in revenue that won't be available in the current budget year, Lannoye said. Much of that funding will

cover recently enacted business tax cuts, she said.

Although there is money left over from the 2004-05 fiscal year, Lannoye urged lawmakers to be careful about spending it until economic data is available later in the fiscal year.